



October 29, 2026

The Honorable Darin LaHood
United States House of Representatives
503 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nanette Barragán
United States House of Representatives
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives LaHood and Barragán:

On behalf of the 48 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), we thank you for introducing H.R.1616, the *Promoting Access to Diabetic Shoes Act*. The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession, representing Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), nurse leaders, boards of nursing, students, faculty, and researchers. The NCC appreciates the introduction of this important, bipartisan legislation and urges its passage into law this Congress.

H.R.1616 will authorize nurse practitioners (NPs) to certify when their patients with diabetes meet the clinical criteria to qualify for therapeutic shoes, so that they can promptly be seen by a podiatrist or other qualified individual to be fit and furnished with this critical intervention. Due to statutory restrictions, Medicare patients with diabetes must currently undergo a multistep process to obtain medically necessary therapeutic shoes. Once the treating NP determines that the patient has a condition requiring therapeutic shoes, the NP must send the patient to a physician to make the same determination and to take over the patient's care related to diabetes. Then, the physician must refer the patient to a podiatrist to fit and furnish the shoes. This process not only forces a patient to change providers, but it delays timely access to therapeutic shoes which have been proven to be a cost-saving and effective prevention and treatment for complications related to diabetes.

As patients continue to receive more care from nurse practitioners and other APRNs, Congress must remove these outdated barriers that limit patient access to care. The National Academy of Medicine and other organizations have urged for the removal of barriers on APRNs, and H.R.1616 would be an important step forward. Further, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) recently stated that authorizing NPs to order therapeutic shoes "is expected to reduce delays in patients accessing this benefit and avoid the costs of an additional clinician visit."¹ CMMI states that waiving this barrier is expected to "limit Medicare expenditures by providing a streamlined approach for certifying and ordering care, avoiding duplicative work."²

As organizations greatly concerned with the nation's nursing workforce and patients' access to timely care, we were pleased to see the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee include this legislation in its September 15, 2026, hearing "*Examining Legislative Proposals to Reform Medicare*

¹ Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Long-term Enhanced ACO Design (LEAD) Model (2026). Page 151. Retrieved from: <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/files/lead-rfa.pdf>

² Ibid.

Provider Payment and Bolster Health Care Cybersecurity." We urge the Committee and the House of Representatives to pass this bill before the end of the year. If the Nursing Community Coalition can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact the coalition's Executive Director, Rachel Minahan, at rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Heart Failure Nurses
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Pediatric Surgical Nurses Association, Inc.
American Public Health Association, Public Health Nursing Section
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Public Health Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Dermatology Nurses' Association
DNPs of Color
Friends of the National Institute of Nursing Research
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Infusion Nurses Society
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Black Nurses Association
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
NurseTRUST
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society of Pediatric Nurses
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates
Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society

cc:

Chairman Brett Guthrie, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Chairman Morgan Griffith, Health Subcommittee, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Ranking Member Dianna DeGette, Health Subcommittee, House Committee on Energy and Commerce